

colonists' defeat at the Battle of Long Island to our final victory at Yorktown. At every point, African American men served bravely and with honor. In fact, one of the first men to die in America's struggle for independence was Crispus Attucks, who was shot by British troops during the Boston massacre. This dedication to the war effort continued right up to the last battle when Salem Poor, a freed slave, earned commendation recommendations from 14 officers for his bravery at Bunker Hill. In recounting Poor's performance at the battle, officers wrote there were too many heroic deeds to describe.

Committed to the cause of American independence, African American soldiers filled every role that the war required of them, whether they served on local militias, worked as cooks and carpenters in camps like Valley Forge, or served as crewmembers on America's first Navy ships. Many African Americans escaped the bondage of slavery to join the American Navy. Still others, like James Armistead, acted as spies for the Revolution by providing American patriots with vital information needed to win the war. Regardless of their roles, they served ably and with distinction.

After the war, the agreements negotiated between slaves and masters were largely honored and the patriots freed upon either enlistment or the end of the war. However, once they had put down the weapons used to win the Nation's independence, a few had to resort to legal means to enforce their claim to liberty. For one patriot—James Robinson, later of Detroit, MI, who also fought in the War of 1812—freedom did not come until the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. Many other African Americans remained trapped in bondage as the institution of slavery expanded in spite of lawsuits, petitions, and agitation.

Many of these African American soldiers would go on to organize early abolitionist and civil rights organizations. One such man was Samuel Harris, a soldier, Baptist minister, and early abolitionist who said, "Liberty is dear to my heart. I cannot endure the thought that my countrymen live as slaves." Nevertheless, despite their valiant service to this country's founding, many African American soldiers were not treated with the dignity that their service demanded. While this country's founding documents stated that all men were created equal, the Nation still sought to hold many Americans as property.

It is estimated that the names of at least half of these brave soldiers would have been lost to history had it not been for the efforts of Plainville, CT native Lena Santos Ferguson. Five years ago, the Daughters of the American Revolution fulfilled a promise made to her in 1984 to identify as many African American Revolutionary War soldiers and patriots as possible. "Forgotten Patriots," contains the names

of over 5,000, as well as the communities where they once resided. Nearly 20 Connecticut towns have approved resolutions that honor them, and they have joined the ranks of those seeking construction of the National Liberty Memorial.

At the beginning of this year President Obama signed into law legislation that was passed by the Congress last year that once again affirmed our public commitment to memorialize these brave patriots through a new memorial in the Monumental Core of our capital city. Liberty Fund D.C., a nonprofit established to lead the effort to construct the memorial, is currently working with architects and Federal agencies to make that goal a reality.

I believe that we must do what we can to build this memorial. Further, I believe that a key feature of any such memorial is that it should be visually tied to the Washington Monument, the most prominent Revolutionary-era monument in the District. There should be a clear sightline from the memorial to the Washington Monument.

For good reason, constructing any new memorial in the Washington, DC area is a rigorous process, and there are a number of prerequisites to be met before construction can begin. I look forward to continuing to work with Liberty Fund D.C. to achieve the goals of this important legislation, to ensure that a monument to the African American patriots of the Revolutionary War be constructed in a prominent location in our Nation's capital.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL KIRK VAN PELT

• Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Arkansas's native son, COL Kirk Van Pelt, for attaining to the rank of brigadier general. On November 3 of this year, Colonel Van Pelt will receive this well-deserved promotion at a ceremony in Arkansas.

Colonel Van Pelt began his military career in 1983 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1985. Colonel Van Pelt has served in a variety of positions in the 39th Infantry Brigade, including Company Commander, Battalion Operations Officer, Battalion Executive Officer, Battalion Commander, Brigade Operations Officer, Brigade XO, Deputy Brigade Commander, and Brigade Commander. Colonel Van Pelt also served as the Commandant of the Arkansas Regional Training Institute Officer Candidate School and the Arkansas Army National Guard G3.

Colonel Van Pelt is a graduate of Excelsior College and received a master's degree from the U.S. Army War College in 2011. He is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and has received numerous awards and decorations for his

service to our country, which include the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, the Iraqi Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral '2', the Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon with Numeral '2', and the Joint Meritorious Unit Citation.

In addition to his excellent military career, Colonel Van Pelt is also the vice president of AIC Inc., a systems integration firm in Sherwood, AR. He and his wife, Kelley, have raised three children: James, a senior at the University of Central Arkansas, Katie, a freshman at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and Hannah, a junior at North Little Rock High School.

Colonel Van Pelt is a valued servant to the people of Arkansas and the United States of America. Our State and Nation have been fortunate to have Colonel Van Pelt's 30 years of service, and I can only hope he can serve another 30 years. I thank him again for his dedication and commitment to keeping our Nation and State safe.●

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL ROGER MCCLELLAN

• Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge and thank BG Roger McClellan, who will retire from the Arkansas Army National Guard at the end of this month after proudly serving 36 years.

A native of Warren, AR, Brigadier General McClellan, is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and has served in a variety of positions in the Arkansas Army National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade, including Battalion Commander, Civil Affairs Officer S-5, and Deputy Commander of the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Since January 1, 2008, Brigadier General McClellan has served as the Arkansas Army National Guard Land Component Commander, where he has been responsible for the overall readiness, training, maintenance, and operational employment of the units assigned and attached to the Arkansas Army National Guard, a position which he has commanded with distinction.

Brigadier General McClellan is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Monticello and has earned master's degrees from Louisiana Tech University in 1983 and the United States Army War College in 2003. He has received numerous awards and decorations for his service to our country,